



TRANSCRIPT

SRSR NICHOLAS HAYSOM'S COMMENTS AT UN70 EXHIBITION

Kabul – 29 October 2015

(near verbatim)

Deputy Minister, friends, distinguished guests – I'd like to welcome you here and to thank you for attending.

This event is simultaneously an exhibition of photographs we would like to share with you, but it's also an anniversary of 70 years of the United Nations existence.

Today we take the opportunity of marking this occasion, together with our partners, our close friends – which includes the media – and those with whom we have closely collaborated in the recent past. So I would just like to say that I am very proud to be able to mark this occasion together with all of you.

Let me say at the outset that the United Nations has a proud record of achievements in all fields of human endeavour. From science, democracy-building, conflict resolution, intervention in famines, the prevention of inter-state wars, all of which are proof of the importance of the founding ideals and principles of the organization.

Whether it be in the form of the hundreds of treaties by which the world has set new standards and new ideals, or whether it be in the form of its concrete interventions in cases of disease and famine, what we see is an underlying principle, that the world, mankind, confronts its challenges better together than divided and separately.

But I don't think we can acknowledge or list our achievements without acknowledging that we have still formidable challenges to meet and to conquer.

Even at this time the world is coming together to develop a common programme known as the Sustainable Development Goals – the SDGs – to take forward the war against poverty and under-development and disease. Even as we speak, the world is attempting to work in unison in meeting the great threat of global warming.

In this region alone, we've seen a surge in destructive conflict. There are more displaced people in the world today than there have been for 70 years.

So, Afghanistan also effectively represents a country where we can acknowledge what has been accomplished, but we have to recognize the challenges which remain and lie ahead.

Afghanistan has been an active, full and vibrant member of the United Nations almost since the beginning of the United Nations. In 1948, Afghanistan was one of only 48 countries which adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. My own country, to its shame – South Africa – refused to adopt the Declaration.

The United Nations has been in Afghanistan for over 60 years and in those 60 years there are a true list of formidable and proud accomplishments. And some of our staff, whom I pay tribute to today, have paid the highest sacrifice. Today I want to single out only one, Toorpaki Ulfat, who was an Afghan who worked for the United Nations and was killed only two weeks ago in Kandahar.

The issue arose for us how best to celebrate the special relationship between the United Nations and Afghanistan, how best to celebrate the work of the United Nations. We have chosen, instead of focusing on the achievements of the organization, to look at and celebrate the work of ordinary Afghans, although they are also extraordinary Afghans.

The 12 professionals or activists who flank me on either side have been chosen because they represent activities which stretch across the full diversity of United Nations engagement in Afghanistan. Their work best expresses our ideals. Whether it be in the protection of human rights, the protection of women's rights, the protection of the cultural heritage of the nation, the protection of the environment, the mobilization of youth, in education and promotion of educational opportunity or in mine-clearance – their work is a credit to them and to Afghanistan.

Two of our young professionals will speak to you in a moment, describing to you the work that they do and that will be a background to the exhibition which records their work.

We've chosen this way of recognizing the 70 years of the UN's existence because it also symbolizes the partnership between the UN and the Afghan people. But more importantly it recognizes that the UN can do nothing except through its capacity to work with and through Afghans.

So before I ask Sediq and Feroza to speak, I just want to in conclusion reconfirm that the United Nations intends to stay in Afghanistan for as long as it will take for Afghans to accomplish their aspirations, which is a stable and prosperous Afghanistan.

United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), Kabul, Afghanistan

For more information, please contact: Spokesperson-UNAMA@un.org
UNAMA online: <http://unama.unmissions.org> • [Facebook](#) • [Twitter](#) • [Flickr](#) • [YouTube](#)